

RESUME WRITING TIPS

Begin by determining your objective (do this prior to writing the resume). Clearly state what sort of a job you want and know what skill-set and experience is needed to do well in that job. After your objective is determined, you can structure the content of your resume around that objective. You have a small window of time to get the interest of a hiring manager and being scattered will only get your resume filed in the “circular file” –i.e.- the trash can. Take the time before you start your resume to form a clear and obtainable objective. You have your objective-you’re on your way.

Now let’s begin the resume writing process. Keep in mind, your resume is a marketing tool to you in the company and in front of the decision maker. Once in, you will need to do the sales pitch, and close the deal. With that said, you don’t need to go into detail about every accomplishment on your resume. Strive to be clear and concise, as the purpose is to generate enough interest in you to have a potential employer contact you for an interview. Bottom line-put yourself in the shoes of the resume reader-when looking at the job qualifications needed for the position; what would you be looking for in a candidate. Obviously, that’s what you need to include in your resume.

1.) Use Bulleted Sentences

In the body of your resume, use bullets with short sentences rather than lengthy paragraphs. Resumes are read quickly; therefore make key phrases stand out. Bulleting information will help the reader view your accomplishments at a glance. Again, don’t worry about the specifics; you will go into details during the interview.

2.) Use Action Words

Use action words-word like prepared, managed, developed, monitors, and presented will cause your resume to stand out. If your resume is scanned electronically, the computer will pick up on the words. You read correctly, some companies now scan in your resume and have computers pull those that meet certain criteria. The computers are looking for one thing- they are looking for keywords that have been picked by the hiring manager. These are action keywords that relate to the position, so not including them could mean your resume is disregarded as a “non match”.

3.) Use %’s, \$’s, and #’s

You should always use %’s, \$’s, and #’s. Dollar totals, numbers, and percentages stand out in the body of a resume. Below are two examples of a job duty described with them (good) and without (bad). As you can see by the examples, being specific does not mean being lengthy.

Example 1

Bad: Account Manager for advertising agency

Good: Managed 15 strategic accounts billing in excess of \$15MM annually

Example 2

Bad: Sold widgets to clients located in the Midwest

Good: Increased sales by 17% in a 5-state territory

4.) Highlight your Strengths

Highlight your strengths, and what is most relevant to the potential employer. In-coming resumes are typically reviewed in 10-30 seconds, so put forth the effort and determine which bullets most strongly support your job search objective. Put the strong and most relevant points first where they are more apt to be read. This is your hook for the reader, the rest of your resume reels them in

5.) Match the need they have

Match the need they have- Review job postings online and in the newspaper for positions that interest you. Each position will usually have a brief blurb about the company and the position available. Use the keywords listed in these ads, and match them to the bullet points in your resume. Chances are that you have some of these key points in your resume. Chances are that you have some of these as key points already, however, if you have missed any, add them to your resume. Using a custom resume instead of a generic one will greatly increase your chances of an interview, as you will be a better match in the eyes of the reader.

6.) Be Positive

Above all in your resume and interview-you must be positive. Therefore, leave off the negatives and irrelevant points. If you feel your graduation date will subject you to age discrimination, leave it off your resume. If you do some duties in your current job that don't support your job search objective, don't include them. Focus on the duties that do support your objective and leave off irrelevant personal information like your race, weight, and height.

7.) White Space is Important

AdDesign 101- White space is important. Open up the newspaper and take note of which ads first catch your attention. Are they the ads that are jammed full of text, or are they ads that have a large amount of unused space ("white space"). This is done to grab your attention, as readers are always attracted to open areas. For this reason, don't worry if you are having a hard time filling the page with text; increase your line spacing to compensate.

8.) Formatting Guidelines

How long should my resume be? What size font should I use? The font size should be no smaller than 10 points, standard serif or sans serif fonts. Don't use intricate fonts that are hard to read. Keeping your fonts standard will help combat conversion issues from PC to MAC and from one program version to another. The length of your resume should be 1-2 pages. Yes, you read correctly; you can use more than one page. But remember, keep it concise. It's okay to use two pages for your resume, however it is not necessary.

9.) Get 3rd Party Advice

Ask a friend and get an outside opinion on your resume before sending it off. Have a friend or resume critique service review your resume. Since you are so close to your situation, it can be difficult for you to note all your high points and clearly convey all your accomplishments. Having

someone subjectively review your resume can give you insight into how others will view your personal marketing materials-would your resume impress them? If not, why? Don't settle for-"it's good", and encourage them to ask questions. The questions of the reader can help you to discover items you inadvertently left off your resume. Take their comments into consideration, and revise your resume accordingly. In addition to adding in missed items, their questions can also point to items on your resume that are confusing to the reader.

10.)Start Applying

OK, you're ready! Start applying-Apply for some jobs that appear to be above your qualifications, apply to positions that are a match, and apply to positions which may be below your level. Why? Perhaps the position below will turn out to be more than it appeared once you interview for them, or perhaps once you have your foot in the door you can learn of other opportunities. If nothing else, interviewing more and more will increase your interviewing skills. Like anything else, repetition will decrease your nervousness, and increase your skills at attacking tough questions.